



For Immediate Release

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January 18, 2022

FULLERTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

D. Russell Parks Celebrates Recognition as a School to Watch

(Fullerton, CA) – D. Russell Parks Junior High School has been named as one of California’s 2022 Schools to Watch-Taking Center Stage model middle schools. The school will also be recognized in March in Monterey, California by the California League of Schools and in Washington, D.C. in June by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform.

“I am thrilled that Parks Junior High has been recognized as a California and National "School to Watch" by the National Forum for Middle-Grades Reform. This award validates our staff’s commitment to providing high quality instruction, effective intervention, and diverse electives offerings while promoting a safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment. As principal of Parks Junior High, I couldn’t be prouder of this achievement,” stated Laura Makely, Principal at Parks Junior High School.

These high-performing model schools demonstrate academic excellence, social equity, and responsiveness to the needs of young adolescents. Parks was recognized in part for its programs including targeted intervention, diverse electives, strong performing arts, support for students’ social-emotional needs, and wide range of extra-curricular activities.

Schools to Watch recognizes middle grade schools for their capacity to promote academic achievement in a safe and caring learning environment where each and every student is positioned to succeed in high school and beyond. Parks Junior High School serves 7th and 8th grade students in the Fullerton School District. California’s Schools to Watch-Taking Center Stage program uses a competitive, rigorous review process to identify high performing, high impact middle schools so that all middle schools may have models of real-world success. Parks Junior High School is one of just of 15 schools to receive the designation this year and one of 137 model schools that have been identified statewide since 2003.

The Schools to Watch program is sponsored by the California Department of Education, [California League of Middle Schools \(CLMS\)](#) , and the [California Middle Grades Alliance](#) . To earn this designation, schools must complete an extensive application that is reviewed by middle grades experts. In order to retain the designation, each school is re-evaluated every three years.. For more information about the program, please visit the [CLMS High Performing Middle School Models](#) The Fullerton School

District is located in northern Orange County, California and serves over 11,100 students in grades TK – 8th. The Fullerton School District includes 20 schools, 15 elementary schools, two K-8th grade schools, and three middle schools. The mission of the Fullerton School District is to work collaboratively with the community to provide an innovative, high-quality educational program for all students in a safe learning environment. The District motto, “*Great Schools - Successful Kids*” exemplifies the belief that all students will achieve academic excellence, acquire interpersonal skills, and develop technological expertise to contribute as productive citizens in a democratic society. For more information, call 714/447-7400 or visit www.fullertonsd.org.

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For more information, please feel free to contact Laura Makely/Principal, Parks Junior High School at 714/447-7785